

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L BAGHDAD 1043

LIMDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PEPR, PINT, US, IZ
SUBJECT: US-IRAQI RELATIONS

1. DURING MY CALL ON ZAHAWI MAY 13, CONVERSATION TURNED TO THE NAMING OF U/S NEWSOM AS REPLACEMENT FOR FORMER U/S HABIB. ZAHAWI WAS INTERESTED IN KNOWING IF NEWSOM WOULD BE TAKING OVER ALL OF HIS PREDECESSOR'S DUTIES, WITH PARTICULAR REFERENCE TO "THE IRAQ PORTFOLIO." I GAVE HIM BRIEF SUMMARY OF U/S NEWSOM'S BACKGROUND, INCLUDING FACT OF HIS SERVICE IN BAGHDAD IN THE EARLY 50'S AND TOLD HIM THAT I HAD MADE BRIEF CALL ON NEWSOM JUST PRIOR TO MY DEPARTURE FROM WASHINGTON TO DISCUSS GENERAL STATE OF US-IRAQI RELATIONS.

2. IN RESPONSE TO ZAHAWI'S REQUEST FOR A SUMMARY OF U.S. POSITION ON THIS SUBJECT, I SAID THAT PRESIDENT CARTER REMAINED INTERESTED IN NORMAL RELATIONS WITH ALL COUNTRIES AND, AS SECRETARY VANCE HAD TOLD FONMIN HAMMADI ON OCTOBER 3, WE SEEK SUCH RELATIONS WITH IRAQ. OUR BELIEF IS THAT ESSENCE OF DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS IS NOT TOTAL AGREEMENT ON ALL MATTERS OF MUTUAL INTEREST BUT IS, AT THE VERY LEAST, MECHANISM FOR THE EXCHANGE OF VIEWS AND INFORMATION. OUR POSITION HAS THEREFORE BEEN MADE CLEAR, AND BALL IS CONFIDENTIAL

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DEFINITELY IN IRAQI COURT.

3. ZAHAWI SAID HE DID NOT FEEL IT WAS NECESSARY TO GO OVER GOI'S POSITION SINCE HE FELT CERTAIN I WAS AWARE OF IT (AND I CERTAINLY AM). HE REMINDED ME THAT HAMMADI HAD MADE IT CLEAR THAT WHILE DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS WERE PERHAPS INAPPROPRIATE AT THIS TIME, OTHER FORMS OF NORMAL DEALINGS

BETWEEN OUR TWO COUNTRIES ARE IN ORDER.

4. I TOOK THIS OPPORTUNITY TO REQUEST ZAHAWI'S ASSISTANCE IN OBTAINING APPOINTMENTS FOR ME AND/OR OTHER USINT OFFICERS WITH A WIDER RANGE OF PERSONS THAN WE HAVE HITHERTO BEEN ABLE TO MEET. WE WOULD LIKE TO TALK TO THE IRAQI NEWS AGENCY, FOR EXAMPLE, ABOUT OUR PLANS TO RECEIVE WIRELESS FILE IN ARABIC, WHICH COULD BE MADE AVAILABLE. I TOLD HIM WE FELT IT WOULD BE MUTUALLY BENEFICIAL TO HAVE OCCASIONS TO TALK FROM TIME TO TIME WITH BAATH PARTY OFFICIALS, EDITORS AND JOURNALISTS, ETC., IN KEEPING WITH HAMMADI'S STATEMENT, AND IN CONNECTION WITH THE PERFORMANCE OF OUR NORMAL DUTIES. ZAHAWI APPEARED INTERESTED IN THIS REQUEST AND PROMISED TO SEEK WHAT COULD BE DONE.

5. I ALSO TOLD HIM THAT WE ARE CONSIDERING MECHANISMS FOR UPGRADING THE ASSISTANCE THAT WE PROVIDE TO THE INCREASING NUMBER OF IRAQI STUDENTS SEEKING EDUCATIONAL COUNSELING AND ADVICE BEFORE THEY LEAVE FOR THE U.S. I MENTIONED THAT ON THE BASIS OF OUR INFORMATION, THE GOI IS EVIDENTLY QUITE SATISFIED WITH THE VOLUME AND QUALITY OF U.S. PRODUCTS/SERVICES AND WITH THE EFFORTS OF AMERICAN FIRMS TO PROVIDE THE THINGS THAT IRAQ NEEDS IN ITS DEVELOPMENT EFFORT. IN THE SAME CONNECTION I MENTIONED U.S. INTEREST IN SEEING FURTHER GROWTH IN IRAQ'S USE OF SPECIALIZED
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TRAINING IN THE U.S. AND PARTICIPATION IN IV PROGRAMS. ZAHAWI READILY AGREED THAT ALL OF THESE WERE INDICATIONS OF NORMAL RELATIONS ON THE NON-DIPLOMATIC LEVEL.

6. IT WAS IN THIS ALMOST EUPHORIC CONTEXT THAT I LATER MADE LOW-KEY PRESENTATION ON CUBA AND THE HORN (BAGHDAD 1029). AS ON OTHER OCCASIONS WHEN I HAVE RAISED SUBJECTS ON WHICH OUR TWO COUNTRIES DISAGREE, ZAHAWI'S REACTION WAS JUST AS MATTER-OF-FACT. HE APPEARS TO ACCEPT THE UTILITY OF EXCHANGING INFORMATION ON THESE KINDS OF ISSUES EVEN IF WE DO NOT HAVE THE FORMAL DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS THAT NORMALLY PROVIDE THE CHANNELS FOR SUCH EXCHANGES.

7. AS DEPT IS AWARE, LAUNCHING OF SADAT INITIATIVE COINCIDED WITH AND PUT AN END TO RUMORS OF IMMINENT RE-ESTABLISHMENT OF RELATIONS. SADAT'S LOSS OF MOMENTUM HAS COINCIDED WITH A SLIGHT EASING OF OUR ISOLATION HERE, BUT NO ONE IS YET AGAIN SPEAKING OF FORMAL RELATIONS. I INTEND TO CONTINUE SEEKING OPPORTUNITIES TO EXPAND OUR RANGE OF CONTACTS. AT THE SAME TIME, AS APPROPRIATE, I PROPOSE TO RAISE WITH ZAHAWI, AMONG OTHERS,

SUBJECTS OF CONCERN TO THE USG.

PECK

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